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Office of Communications News Release

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National Park Service Kicks-Off Healthy Parks Healthy People Greater Washington Area Initiative

Washington, D.C. - The National Park Service (NPS) will kick off the Healthy Parks Healthy People Greater Washington Area Initiative at three National Park sites today and this weekend. These events will take place on Thursday, September 20 at the Lincoln Memorial, Saturday, September 22 at Fort Dupont Park, and Sunday, September 23 at Rock Creek Park. All activities are FREE and open to the public.

Today's event at the Lincoln Memorial will feature Dr. Robert Zarr, past President of the DC Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, writing the first DC Park Prescription to students participating in the event. This will be followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony, celebrating the opening of the first Kids in Parks TRACK Trail in the Greater Washington area. Third graders from Neval Thomas Elementary School in DC will be among the first to walk the National Mall and Memorial Parks' TRACK Trail which is the first of 13 planned TRACK Trails in the Greater Washington National Parks. National Mall and Memorial Parks Superintendent Robert Vogel and Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Superintendent Kevin Brandt will join Dr. Zarr to celebrate NPS and local health providers' efforts to implement the Healthy Parks Healthy People Greater Washington Area Initiative.

Healthy Parks Healthy People Greater Washington Area is a NPS initiative working with partners to encourage people to enjoy parks and public lands for their physical and mental well-being. Since 2004, the NPS, National Capital Region (NCR) has been working on health related projects to connect healthcare providers and their patients with parks and public lands to expand and strengthen the fight against obesity and reconnect youth and families with their natural environment.

Key partners in this growing collaborative effort include the NPS, D.C. Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Unity Health Care, Inc., Children's National Medical Center, D.C. Department of Health, D.C. Primary Care Association, National Environmental Education Foundation, National Association of Community Health Centers, The Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition to today's event, other National Parks will also be celebrating Healthy Parks Healthy People Greater Washington Area Initiative at the following locations, dates and times:

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<u>Fort Dupont Park</u> (a unit of National Capital Parks-East) Randle Circle and Minnesota Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC

Healthy Parks Healthy People & TRACK Trail Dedication 11:00 a.m., Saturday, September 22

The National Park Service (NPS) and its partners will celebrate the DC Park Prescriptions and Kids in Parks' TRACK Trail program at Fort Dupont Park. A loop trail in Fort Dupont Park will be officially designated a TRACK Trail during a ribbon cutting ceremony featuring Dr. Sophia Smith, a DC Pediatrician and Jason Urroz, Director of the Kids in Parks' program. Following the ceremony Dr. Smith will write park prescriptions to children participating in the event. All visitors are invited to hike the new TRACK Trail with a park ranger. The TRACK Trail in Fort Dupont Park begins and ends near the Activity Center. The 1.3 mile trail allows users to go for a healthy hike and experience the natural beauty of the park.

The ceremony will be one component of Fort Dupont Park's "Feet in the Street" event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Saturday. "D.C. Feet in the Street" promotes physical activity, green transportation choices, healthy eating, and community spirit. Roadways in Fort Dupont Park, including Fort Davis Drive and Fort Dupont Drive, will be closed to motor vehicles. Visitors are invited to come put their Feet in the Street and run, walk, bike, skate, and move along this 1.6 mile long corridor. Activities will include healthy cooking demonstrations, rock climbing wall, concerts, free bicycle rentals, nature hikes, bike tours, and "Live Well DC" exercise and yoga classes. To learn more visit www.nps.gov/fodu or call 202-426-7723.

Rock Creek Park

4100 Broad Branch at Beach Drive, N.W., Washington, DC

Kids in Parks Track Trails Ribbon Cutting ceremony and Ranger-led Walk 2:00 p.m., Sunday, September 23

As part of Rock Creek Park's 122nd birthday celebration, the park will roll out Healthy Parks Healthy People Greater Washington Area Initiative with a 1.8 mile walk on the new Track Trail along Rock Creek. Visitors should meet at Picnic Grove #2 west parking lot. Join children and health advocates and discover the health benefits of walking for your body and mind in the beautiful Rock Creek Valley. Event will take place rain or shine. All ages are welcome.

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